

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Apparatus for compacting fine particulate earth or sand material around an elongate member laid in a trench, said apparatus including at least one disc member having a plurality of teeth like formations around its periphery and mount means for said at least one disc member permitting said disc member to roll through said fine particulate material in said trench, said mount means including connection means enabling said apparatus to be connected to machinery for moving the apparatus along said trench.
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2. Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein two said disc members are provided spaced apart but rotatable about a common axis, said mount means including a shaft interconnecting said disc members.
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3. Apparatus according to claim 2 wherein the spacing distance between said disc members is selectively adjustable.
4. Apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein said teeth like formations have a square or rectangular shape.
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5. Equipment for spreading and levelling fine particulate earth or sand material already deposited in the base region of a preformed trench, said equipment including a pair of laterally spaced side walls supported by skid members adapted, in use, to be positioned on a base surface of the trench, each
20 said skid member extending generally in line with the direction of the trench and being located adjacent a side wall of the trench, said equipment including cross brace means for maintaining spacing of said side walls during use, wall means closing a cross-sectional zone of said equipment between said side walls having a lower edge adapted to provide a level surface to said fine particulate material
25 spread by said wall means, and connection means enabling said equipment to be connected to machinery for moving the equipment along said trench supported on the base of said trench.

6. Equipment according to claim 5 wherein said cross brace means and said wall means are adjustable to enable the transverse spacing between said side walls to be selectively adjustable to accommodate differing width trenches.

7. Equipment according to claim 5 or claim 6 wherein said wall means is 5 adjustable in a vertical direction to selectively vary the distance between the lower edge of the wall means and the base of the trench.

8. Equipment according to any one of claims 5 to 7 wherein said wall means includes at least one groove forming protuberance extending downwardly in the lower edge, the or each said protuberance being positioned intermediate the side 10 walls of the equipment.

9. Equipment according to any one of claims 5 to 8 wherein said wall means is located at or adjacent to a rear end of said side walls.

10. A method of laying and embedding a pipeline or similar elongate member in a trench, said method involving the steps of:

15 (i) depositing fine particulate bedding material into the trench for use as bedding under the elongate member;

(ii) placing first apparatus in the trench, said first apparatus having spaced side wall means supported by support means resting on a base of said trench with said side wall means located adjacent respective side walls of said trench, said first apparatus also including a transverse wall member having a lower edge spaced upwardly from the base of said trench;

20 (iii) moving said first apparatus along said trench while said transverse wall member spreads said fine particulate material and the lower edge of said transverse wall means provides a level surface for said fine particulate material;

(iv) laying said elongate member on said level surface of said fine particulate material;

(v) depositing a further quantity of fine particulate material into said trench such that said further quantity at least partially fills the space between said 30 elongate member and the side walls of the trench;

- (vi) passing a second apparatus along said trench at least once, said second apparatus including at least one disc member having a plurality of teeth like formations around its periphery whereby the or each said disc member rolls through said fine particulate material on either side of said elongate member; and
- (vii) back filling the trench.

11. A method according to claim 10 wherein the trench is back filled with previously excavated material from the trench.

12. A method according to claim 10 or claim 11 wherein the fine particulate material is provided to the trench site from a remote source.

13. A method according to any one of claims 10 to 12 wherein the second apparatus includes two spaced apart said disc members, a said disc member being located on either side of the elongated member.

14. A method according to claim 13 wherein the second apparatus is passed along said trench only once.